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Message Text

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21
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SUBJ: KAMA TRUCK COMPLEX - FULL PRODUCTION BY 1980?

REF: A. MOSCOW 1712
B. MOSCOW 1597
C. MOSCOW 18656, DEC 17, 1974
D. MOSCOW 17508, NOV 19, 1974

1. SUMMARY - THE FIRST KAMAZ TRUCK WILL NO DOUBT ROLL OUT OF NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY BY THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY AS PROMISED. IT WILL BE LARGELY HAND-CRAFTED FROM COMPONENTS PRODUCED ELSEWHERE, HOWEVER, FOR THE KAMAZ COMPLEX IS FAR FROM FINISHED. AMERICAN EQUIPMENT INSTALLERS REPORT THAT KEY SECTIONS OF THE ENGINE PLANT WILL NOT EVEN BE IN PARTIAL OPERATION BY FEBRUARY, AND KAMAZ OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT NO FOUNDRY SHOP WILL BEGIN PRODUCTION BEFORE MID-1976. 1980 IS THE LATEST PROVATE OFFICIAL ESTIMATE FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FULL PRODUCTION. THIS MESSAGE, BASED ON A VISIT TO NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY BY TWO COMMERCIAL OFFICERS OCTOBER 20-22 AND PRESS REPORTS, PROVIDES DETAILS OF PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS AT KAMAZ. A SEPARATE AIRGRAM DESCRIBES THE GENERALLY GOOD LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE 50-ODD AMERICAN SPECIALISTS NOW INSTALLING MACHINERY IN THE COMPLEX. END SUMMARY

2. A VISITOR TO NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY IS CONFORNETED BY
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PROPAGANDA SIGNS READING "KAMAZ WILL BE - KAMAZ MUST BE."

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THE SIGNS GIVE NO INDICATION OF WHEN KAMAZ WILL BE, HOWEVER, AS THE INITIAL TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION PASSED IN 1974. THE KAMAZ ADMINISTRATION HAS COMMITTED THE COMPLEX TO PRODUCE ITS FIRST TRUCK BEFORE THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY 1976, BUT THIS MODEL WILL BE LARGELY HAND-CRAFTED FROM PARTS PRODUCED AT OTHER AUTOMOTIVE COMPLEXES. THE ADMINISTRATION'S CHIEF OF PROTOCOL TOLD COMMERCIAL OFFICERS THAT FULL PRODUCTION OF 150,000 TRUCKS AND 250,000 ENGINES PER YEAR SHOULD BE ACHIEVED BY 1980.

3. THE ONLY KAMAZ DIVISION NOW IN OPERATION IS THE TOOLING AND REPAIR PLANT, WHICH IS MANUFACTURING METAL FLOOR PLATES AND CUTTING TOOLS IN PREPARATION FOR PRODUCTION IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE COMPLEX. SOME OF ITS CURRENT OUTPUT IS BEING SHIPPED ELSEWHERE, HOWEVER, SINCE THE OTHER DIVISIONS ARE SO FAR BEHIND SCHEDULE. THE PLANT NOW EMPLOYS OVER 5,000 WORKERS ON TWO SEVEN-AND-A-HALF HOUR SHIFTS, AND THIS NUMBER WILL CLIMB TO 10,000 WHEN FULL PRODUCTION IS REACHED. CLEAN AND WELL-LIGHTED, THE PLANT'S MAIN BUILDING IS A WORKING EXHIBITION OF CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE WORLD'S LEADING MACHINE TOOL INDUSTRIES, FOR A VISITOR QUICKLY SPOTS MACHINES FROM SWITZERLAND (THE PRINCIPAL WESTERN SUPPLIER), AND FRG, BRITAIN, ITALY, AND THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE USSR ITSELF. A FULL 40 PERCENT OF ITS EQUIPMENT IS IMPORTED.

4. AMONG THE OTHER DIVISIONS VISITED INSTALLATION WORK IS FARTHEST ADVANCED IN THE ENGINE PLANT, WHICH WILL GO INTO PARTIAL PRODUCTION BEFORE THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. THIS ENORMOUS BUILDING, 1.1 KILOMETERS LONG, CONTAINS A PATCHWORK OF INSTALLED MACHINERY AND VACANT SQUARES OF DIRT AS MANY CRATES ARE STILL SITTING OUTSIDE THE PLANT WAITING FOR INSTALLATION WORK TO BEGIN. PLANT OFFICIALS TOLD COMMERCIAL OFFICERS THAT ONE LINE WAS EXPECTED TO GO INTO OPERATION BY FEBRUARY TO PERMIT COMPLETE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF ENGINES. HOWEVER, AMERICAN INSTALLERS DOUBTED THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE JURY-RIGGING SINCE THE CENTRAL MACHINE TOOL COOLANT SYSTEM WAS FAR FROM COMPLETION AND THE OVENS FOR HEAT TREATING ENGINE COMPONENTS WOULD BARELY BE UNCRATED BY THAT TIME. THE PLANT'S HEATING SYSTEM WAS TURNED ON OCTOBER
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20, ENABLING THE INSTALLERS TO SHED THEIR CUMBERSOME WINTER COATS AND PERMITTING OPERATION OF HYDRAULIC SYSTEMS WHICH COULD NOT BE RUN IN THE COLD. THE INSTALLERS COMPLAINED, HOWEVER, THAT WORK IS STILL SLOWED BY THE NEED TO LOCK AWAY ALL PORTABLE TOOLS AND SUPPLIES EVERY EVENING, FOR THEFT REMAINS A PROBLEM DESPITE (OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF) THE ARMY TROOPS GUARDING THE PLANT.

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5. THE AUTOMOTIVE PLANT, WHICH COMBINES ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS WITH PARTS PRODUCTION, IS ALSO A MELANGE OF FULLY-INSTALLED MACHINERY AND BARE DIRT. THE BUILDING'S 1.3-KILOMETER LENGTH PRECLUDES A QUICK COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTION, BUT INSTALLATION WORK APPEARED LESS ADVANCED THAN IN THE ENGINE PLANT. THE FINAL ASSEMBLY AREA, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS A HUGH ROOFED FIELD WITHOUT A PIECE OF UNCRATED MACHINERY IN SIGHT.

6. EVEN FURTHER DELAYED IS THE FOUNDRY PLANT, WHICH IS STILL SWIMMING IN A SEA OF MUD. COMMERCIAL OFFICERS VISITING THE GREY AND MALLEABLE IRON FOUNDRY, THE PLANT'S LARGEST COMPONENT, FOUND ONLY A FEW MACHINES IN PLACE ON THE MUD-STREWN FLOORS. AMERICAN INSTALLERS CONFIRMED THAT THE BUILDING'S FOUNDATIONS HAVE SUNK 10 CM IN SOME PLACES AND SAID THE KAMAZ ADMINISTRATION IS NOW ATTEMPTING TO JACK THEM UP TO THE PROPER HEIGHT. ACCORDING TO SOVIET OFFICIALS, THE GREY AND MALLEABLE IRON FOUNDRY'S HEATING SYSTEM WILL BE TURNED ON IN NOVEMBER AND PRODUCTION WILL START IN MID-1976. THE PRECISION AND STEEL FOUNDRIES LAG SOMEWHAT BEHIND THE GREY AND MALLEABLE IRON FOUNDRY, AMERICAN SPECIALISTS REPORTED, WITH THE NON-FERROUS FOUNDRY IN LAST PLACE.

7. THE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS DID NOT VISIT THE FORGING AND PRESSING/STAMPING PLANTS OR THE HYDROELECTRIC STATION, BUT KAMAZ OFFICIALS TOLD THEM THE LATTER WILL GO INTO OPERATION IN 1977-78. UNTIL THAT TIME THE COMPLEX IS BEING SUPPLIED WITH BOTH HEAT AND ELECTRICITY FROM A THERMOELECTRIC PLANT FED FROM THE NATURAL GAS DEPOSITS SURROUNDING NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY. OFFICIALS ALSO SAID THAT TIRES FOR THE KAMAZ TRUCKS WILL COME FROM NEIGHBORING NIZHNEKAMSK, WHERE A NEW DIVISION OF THE EXISTING TIRE PLANT WILL OPEN NEXT YEAR.

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8. THE PRESENT PORT FACILITIES ON THE KAMA RIVER WILL BE TOTALLY FLOODED WHEN THE HYDROELECTIRC STATION'S DAM IS BUILT, AND A NEW FREIGHT AND PASSENGER PORT WILL BE CONSTRUCTED FURTHER DOWN RIVER. ALONG WITH THE NEW PORT, HIGHWAYS AND A NEW RAIL LINK WILL HAVE TO BE READY WHEN KAMAZ APPROACHES FULL PRODUCTION IN ORDER TO DISGORGE THE 150,000 TRUCKS PER YEAR OUT OF NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY TO OTHER AREAS OF THE SOVIET UNION. GIVEN THE GREAT DISTANCES BETWEEN THE KAMAZ'S CONSTITUENT PLANTS, INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION WILL ALSO BE A PROBLEM, AND A VAST CONVEYOR SYSTEM IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION TO INTEGRATE THE ENTIRE COMPLEX.

9. COORDINATION OF PLANT CONSTRUCTION WITH INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IS ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING PROBLEMS AT KAMAZ. NABEREZHNYYE CHELNY HAS GROWN FROM 30,000 INHABITANTS IN THE 1960' TO 240,000 TODAY AND WILL REACH AN EXPECTED 500,000 WHEN THE COMPLEX ACHIEVES FULL PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYS 80,000 WORKERS. DESPITE PUBLICIZED COST OVERRUNS, SOVIET PLANNERS SEEM TO BE RESPONDING COMPARATIVELY WELL TO THIS CHALLENGE, FOR THE NEW CITY IS BY USSR STANDARDS ATTRACTIVE AND WELL-CONSTRUCTED. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES ARE MORE VARIED THAN IN MOSCOW APART-MENT COMPLEXES, AND THE NEWER OF THE TWO FOREIGN SPECIALIST HOTELS, WHICH WILL REVERT TO SOVIET USE WITH THE SPECIALISTS' DEPARTURE, SEEMED SOUNDLY BUILT. COORDINATION PROBLEMS REMAIN, HOWEVER, AS EVIDENCED BY THE LACK OF GAS IN THE SPECIALISTS' HOTELS. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS ALREADY SPOTLIGHTED THIS PROBLEM, AND OFFICIALS CLAIM SERVICE WILL REACH THIS SECTION OF THE CITY BY JANUARY.
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10. ASKED WHY WORKERS CAME TO KAMAZ FROM ALL OVER THE USSR, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SUGGESTED PARTIOTISM AND ADVENTURE. THEY ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT PAY DIFFERENTIALS -- RANGING UP TO 40 PERCENT -- ALSO PLAYED A ROLE. A DIFFERENT ANSWER WAS GIVEN BY A YOUNG, SINGLE ENGINEER-ECONOMIST FROM BAKU, WHO SAID SHE HAD BEEN ATTRACTED BY PROSPECTS OF GETTING HER OWN APARTMENT IN THREE YEARS. THE SHORT-TERM HOUSING SITUATION IS NOT SO FAVORABLE, SHE ADDED, FOR AT LEAST ONE CHILDLESS COUPLE HAS NOT RECEIVED AN APARTMENT ALTHOUGH BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE KAMAZ ENGINEERS. THE HUSBAND NOW LIVES AT A MEN'S DORMITORY WHILE THE WIFE ROOMS SOME BLOCKS AWAY AT A WOMEN'S DORM.

MATLOCK

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